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Philly woman delivers her own baby on I-95 in Boston

by Diane Stopyra

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Baby Archie might have been born in Patriots' country, but he's still an Eagles fan.



Kathryn and Nick Fazzie, with baby Archie

Courtesy of Katie Fazzie

Some people live life in the fast lane. Others? They give life in the fast line. People like Kathryn Fazzie, a 33-year-old resident of South Philly.

In the wee hours of the morning on November 19, Kathryn delivered her own baby in the front seat of a car traveling 90 miles per hour on I-95 near Boston. During a snowstorm. With a toddler in the backseat.

Kathryn and her husband Nick, 38, had taken their 15-month-old daughter Lucia on a pre-Thanksgiving trip to New England and Canada. Knowing this would likely be their last family vacation before the arrival of their second baby, due January 11, they made the most of it with stops in Quebec City and Bar Harbor, Maine. They found themselves at the Hotel Portsmouth in New Hampshire, feeling tired and disgruntled [after a brutal Eagles loss against the Saints](#). Kathryn painted her nails and half-listened as her husband, a portfolio manager with Conshohocken investment firm Hirtle, Callaghan and Co, rattled off info about spots to sightsee. They called it an early night.

“It know it sounds crazy, but around 12:30 a.m. we both woke up with this strange feeling,” Kathryn said. “I had a bizarre sense someone was standing over us.” For those who believe in such things, it’s not a stretch to speculate this ghostly presence may have been the spirit of Kathryn’s late grandfather, William Kelly, who delivered at least five babies in cars during his tenure as a Philadelphia police officer. “Then I started feeling awful, and I thought maybe it was something I’d eaten earlier in the day. But, when the feeling didn’t go away, I knew something wasn’t right.”

With his wife hunched over the bathtub and breathing through pain, Nick packed the car, grabbing as many towels as possible and, in a panic, the hotel’s blow dryer. Lucia was excited to be strapped into her car seat for an adventure in her pajamas. By 2 a.m., the family was on the road, only to realize their rental, a Chevy Tahoe, was on empty. “Of all the times to be low on gas!” said Kathryn, a manager with Philadelphia’s Oil Patch Fuel Corporation.



Nick and Kathryn Fazzie with baby Archie

Courtesy of Katie Fazzie

Despite a heavy, sleeting snow, they were able to find a gas station and put \$11 worth of fuel in the tank, but the delay made the situation more dire. “I wanted to get to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston,” Nick said. “Kathryn told me, ‘I don’t think I’m going to make it.’ So I sort of lied and

said, ‘Well, it’s 40 minutes away,’ when I knew it was an hour and ten.” To cope with the pain, Kathryn got on all fours in the front seat, unable to recline her chair because of Lucia’s carseat in the back.

Headed southbound in the middle lane of I-95 between 80 and 90 miles per hour, the couple heard what sounded “like a dam bursting,” Nick said. “I look over and I’m like, ‘Well, I guess your water broke.’” At that point, he called 911, thinking he would alert the hospital they were on their way. While being patched through to a state trooper, he got disconnected and was forced to redial while navigating increasingly treacherous conditions — crossing the Massachusetts state line meant a less-salted interstate.

“I knew I had to push,” said Kathryn, who laughs at the memory of 18-wheeler tractor trailers whizzing by on either side. “The body goes into fight or flight mode. I think adrenaline just takes over. One push — not even a full push — and he was out.”

Remembering the words of her mother, Linda Kelly, formerly a neurotrauma nurse at the University of Pennsylvania, Kathryn knew to support her newborn’s neck and clear the airway with her pinky. Then, she wrapped the baby in a scarf before realizing she forgot to check: boy or girl? She unwrapped him again and turned to her husband, still on the phone. “It’s a boy,” she said.

“I just happen to glance over and she’s looking up at me with the baby in her arms,” Nick said. “And into the phone I’m like: “Change everything. You have to get an ambulance to exit 52 as soon as you can!” He pulled over onto a narrow shoulder of the interstate in Boxford, Mass. and got out of the car to wait for a state trooper, local police and EMTs, who began arriving three to five minutes later. Lucia, who had been fairly calm until this point, started screaming. She wasn’t upset by what she’d just witnessed but by the fact “no one was paying any attention to her,” Kathryn said.

While emergency responders cut the umbilical cord and checked vital signs, Nick talked with the police. “In a very serious voice, they told me they needed to ask me some questions, but that I’d need to remove my hat first,” he said. “I did it without thinking, then I realized they were busting my chops. It was an Eagles hat.”

With about five inches of snow now on the ground, Kathryn was transferred to a stretcher and into an ambulance, even though she suggested everyone let her walk. “I left my dignity on the side of the road,” she said. “Thank God for leggings, which I was able to pull back on.”

From here, firefighter Tom Nee, who helped clamp and cut the cord, drove the ambulance approximately 20 minutes to Beverly Hospital, with Nick and Lucia following behind. “I have been responding to emergency calls on route I-95 for 16 years,” Nee said. “This was the polar opposite of what we usually do out there. Obviously mom did most of the work. We were just happy to have a baby that was pink in color and breathing. Every firefighter involved had a smile on their face when we got back to the station.”

In the hospital, Kaite was able to deliver the placenta and get her five-pound, twelve-ounce baby, named Archie Boxford Fazzie, settled into the NICU where he has already graduated from a CPAP machine to help with breathing in premature babies. Here he will build strength and put on weight for at least another couple weeks. Because he had such a rapid birth, he suffered a lot of bruising around his eyes that’s earned him the nickname Archie the fighter — or “Ahchee the fightah — among staff.

“I could not have asked for a better care team — they are truly angels without wings,” Kathryn said, adding that the Beverly nurses have gifted Archie with everything from a New England Patriots blanket to a construction paper rendering of the Philly LOVE sign in his room. “They say we seem like lovely people, except for our taste in sports teams.”

For those who’d like to meet Kathryn and Archie, it’s possible you already have — Kathryn’s family owns and runs the Fudgy Wudgy business at the Jersey Shore, meaning if you visited a Cape May County beach last summer, it’s likely Kathryn served you ice cream while pregnant with her miracle baby.

“He’s definitely the Fudgy Wudgy baby born in Massachusetts,” she said.

As for Kathryn’s nickname? That’s easy, Nick said: “I call her Superwoman.”